



Multidisciplinary Treatment and Referral Team

A vital component of responding to trafficking is collaborating across sectors. Every individual who has experienced trafficking is unique and will require a different mix of services. It is important to understand and remain within the appropriate scope of practice for your specific role and license and look beyond your own organization when referring an individual to services like legal aid, housing, medical care, and behavioral health services.

Below are examples of how each partner can support your response to trafficking.



Health Care Providers

Health centers can be invaluable partners in collaborating with professionals to identify and respond to human trafficking. Individual health care needs will vary but may include:

- Primary care
- Emergency department for acute health concerns (e.g., broken bones, malnutrition, dehydration)
- Dental care
- Sexual assault forensic examination
- Substance use treatment
- Short- and long-term medical treatment, depending on the injury or infection
- Optometry
- Referrals to other specialists (e.g., gynecologist, dermatologist, orthopedist)

For help in finding healthcare providers who have worked with individuals with a history of trafficking, contact [HEAL Trafficking](#), or another interdisciplinary network of health professionals across the country dedicated to ending human trafficking and supporting survivors.

Legal Aid Professionals

As with healthcare, behavioral health, and social service needs, an individual's legal needs will vary. Legal aid professionals can provide services such as:

- Information about legal options and legal advocates
- Applying for "T" or "U" visas for individuals who have experienced trafficking and their families
- Helping with orders of protection
- Representing individuals who testify against their traffickers
- Assisting with documentation needed for eviction and housing issues
- Obtaining proper legal documentation, including proof of age and name at birth
- Vacatur and expungement relief for individuals with a criminal history as a result of their trafficking
- Family court



Community-Based Organizations

These organizations bring well-developed networks, strong community trust, and long-standing expertise serving refugees, individuals who have experienced violence, and other populations in need. They also have the capacity to tailor services in their own communities based on localized research and experience.

Community-based organizations can support the development of a protocol and serve as a primary referral for individuals for a variety of services such as:

- Housing
- Food assistance
- Interpretation/translation assistance
- Childcare
- Vocational training

You can view a sample memorandum of understanding and other resources for building partnerships with community-based organizations [here](#).

Social Services

Many individuals who have experienced trafficking may benefit from resources related to housing, employment, benefits, or disability.

- Benefits (i.e., cash, food, or energy assistance for those with low incomes)
- Childcare
- Head Start programs
- Child support offices
- Vocational assistance programs for individuals with disabilities
- These resources could include connections to:

Public Health Professionals

As a field, public health professionals provide a range of services in many diverse settings. They can contribute to preventing and identifying human trafficking in a variety of ways, some more obvious than others. Consider, for example:

- Health safety inspectors identifying potential indicators of trafficking in businesses or homes and knowing the process to make a report
- Community health workers noticing the spread of disease and infection in a specific population and recognizing the correlation to trafficking
- Researchers identifying methods for preventing trafficking in specific geographic areas by identifying risk factors and service needs
- Providers developing an informational resource for clients who may be at risk of trafficking



Law Enforcement Professionals

Human trafficking is a crime in all 50 states and 16 territories. To learn more about the laws in your state or territory, visit the Polaris Project's [State Ratings on Human Trafficking Laws](#). As a mandated reporter, you likely already have members of child welfare and/or law enforcement in your referral network. In addition to services in the criminal justice system, law enforcement professionals can also:

- Refer you to service providers in the area
- Provide a network of resources through a human trafficking task force, where available
- Provide certification to help individuals apply for immigration relief

Survivors

Regularly include survivor leaders in your organization's work, including:

- Informing mission, vision, and culture
- Approach to program development, implementation, and evaluation
- Referral networks and partnerships
- Outreach and awareness-raising activities
- Human resource and staffing development

Survivor leaders have subject matter expertise and should be compensated in the same way organizations compensate any other professional.

Behavioral Health Professionals

Many individuals who have experienced trafficking have experienced multiple traumas over the course of their lives. They develop unique responses to these events as well as coping mechanisms. Develop an internal protocol for referring individuals to behavioral health specialists in your organization and one for outside referrals.

Behavioral health providers can help survivors address their trauma through:

- Counseling services
- Treatment for mental health or substance use
- Sexual assault trauma services
- Short- and long-term therapy
- Referrals for more specialized care
- School-based counselors
- Medication management

You can learn more about the intersection of behavioral health and human trafficking through HEAL Trafficking. HEAL's [Mental Health Council](#) works to improve care for individuals who have experienced trafficking by advancing the field's understanding of the intersection of mental health and healthcare for this specific population.



School-Based Professionals

Public educational institutions can provide a variety of services and resources for individuals who have experienced trafficking, and their family members who are connected to educational institutes. Examples of services and resources that may be provided by educational institutions include:

- School-based health centers
- Counseling
- Head Start programming
- Literacy programs
- Mentoring
- Home visits
- Before and after school programming
- Parent support activities (e.g., parent's night out, parenting classes, GED classes)
- Accommodations for individuals struggling with school
- Free or reduced meals, including on the weekend
- Referrals to community resources
- Informational materials and brochures on various topics (e.g., suicide prevention, bullying prevention, child abuse and neglect, healthy relationships, child and youth labor rights)

Addressing Various Needs

By building a comprehensive multidisciplinary treatment and referral team, you can work together to meet the various needs of an individual experiencing trafficking and their family members. Here are examples of immediate, medium-term, and long-term needs:

Emergency Needs

- Safety
- Medical care, including mental health care
- Shelter
- Legal assistance
- Treatment for substance use
- Food

Medium-Term Needs

- Ongoing medical care, including mental health care and treatment for substance use
- Transportation to service appointments
- Access to systemic services
- Ongoing emotional support

Long-Term Needs

- Housing
- Legal aid
- Ongoing medical care, including mental health care and treatment for substance use to address the effects of long-term trauma